



Function First, Inc. Special Report

Top 10 Questions To Ask a Potential Personal Trainer

1. What exercise science related degrees and/or certifications do you have?

This is your assurance you're working with a trainer who has the knowledge to provide you with a safe and effective workout.

Degrees or certifications don't necessarily guarantee you the best trainer.

But trainers that have an exercise science related degree and/or a national certification have demonstrated a level of competency that someone who took a weekend workshop or internet certification won't have.

Yes, some certifications are better than others. And if someone is looking to improve their professional competency, there is no reason they shouldn't earn a more challenging certification.

Look for certifications by certifying organizations such as the American Council on Exercise, the National Strength and Conditioning Association and the National Academy of Sports Medicine. These organizations have achieved accreditation by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

In addition, be sure that the trainer is maintaining continuing education units to keep current on the latest research and trends.



2. What criteria will you use to determine my exercise program?

You should always be asked to fill out a health history questionnaire to determine your needs and limitations. A trainer should take into account any medical conditions or past injuries.

If you are under a doctor's care, the trainer should discuss any exercise concerns with your doctor, and should ask for a health screening or release from your doctor. The trainer should then perform both a cardiovascular assessment and musculoskeletal assessment to determine your current level of fitness.

Never let a trainer tell you that they are giving you a "well rounded" program to hit all major body parts. That is a cop out. Every individual has their own strengths and weaknesses and this should be determined through the assessment and then addressed in your specific exercise prescription.

3. Do you have proof of professional liability insurance?

Almost every "A" rated insurance carrier that provides professional liability for the fitness industry requires certification from a reputable certifying body. The implications here are clear.

If the trainer does not have coverage, he/she is either not insurable or is not adhering to our professional standards. Run, don't walk from this appointment.

4. Have you ever worked with a client like me that is _____(fill in the blank with your own personal concerns, limitations or desires)?

The trainer you hire should have previous experience with people just like you. A 60 year old retiree does not want to work with a trainer whose primarily trains bodybuilders.

Ask for referrals from existing clients who have similar needs, goals or characteristics as you. Many of the better trainers today prefer to work with specific populations and work hard at learning as much about those types of clients as possible.

The trainer you are speaking with might even prefer to refer you to someone who works with clients like you. We refer people out all the time. For example, we don't do any nutrition or meal planning with clients because that is not one of our strengths.

5. Who is your support network or sounding board when you have a question regarding a client?

All good trainers should have resources such as physicians, therapists, or more experienced trainers that they can turn to with questions and assistance. That individual does not necessarily have to be on site with your trainer, but they should be accessible.

Many training companies even have an Advisory Board. If a trainer offers to "look up" the answer(s), it shows good initiative. But it is not the same as having an experienced professional to confer with.

6. What is your communication style or demeanor when training clients?

It's important that you match your needs with a trainer who can fulfill them. Do you need a motivator, an educator or tough love? The approach the trainer brings to your session can determine if you stick to your program or not.

Your trainer is more than someone who designs an exercise program for you. They are your ally and support network for reaching your goals. This should be a person that you respect and get from the relationship what you want.

7. What kind of results can I expect?

A trainer who makes unrealistic promises is setting you up for disappointment. Based on your goals, your trainer should be able to give you a general idea where you will be in one month, three months and six months if you stick to the plan.

8. Can you provide me with references of satisfied clients?

Talk with clients with goals or limitations similar to your own to see if they were pleased with their workouts. But also talk with other clients to get an overall perspective of this trainer's strengths and weaknesses. Ask if the trainer was punctual and prepared, and if they felt their individual needs were addressed.

9. What is your availability for training me?

Struggling to make inconvenient appointments based on the trainers schedule and not yours, sets up a needless barrier to your success. But also keep in mind that a good trainer will have lots of clients and often the popular time slots may be taken.

You have to balance the desire to work with a specific trainer and their available time for scheduling with you.

10. What is your payment plan and cancellation policy?

Many trainers will offer different price structures based on your financial commitment to training with them. Knowing the cancellation process up front can eliminate any awkward misunderstandings.

Your trainer should be able to provide all of this information to you in writing. It's even a good idea for both of you to sign a contract that clearly outlines the financial expectations of both sides.

This Special Report is brought to you by Function First, Inc., The Exercise Alternative For Pain Relief. In addition to offering corrective exercise products and services, Function First also offers personal training programs. To learn more about Function First Personal Training, please visit www.FunctionFirst.com or contact us at 619-285-9218.